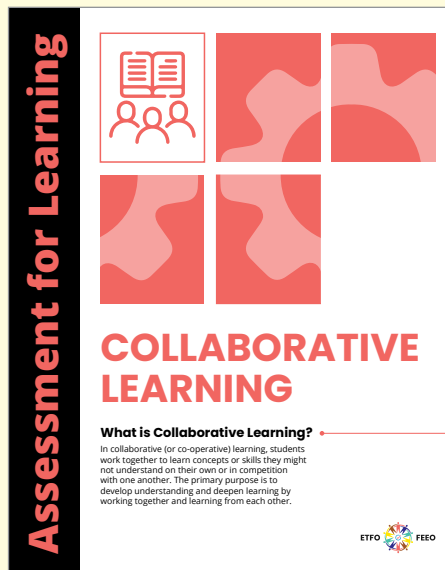


COLLABORATIVE LEARNING



ABOUT THIS RESOURCE:

ETFO's Assessment for Learning series is designed to support members in gathering evidence of student learning through conversation and observation. The series explores how assessment for learning can take place through a variety of practices, with a focus on personal communication tasks that offer moments of connection between teachers and students, resulting in more personal, descriptive feedback.

Find the full series at members.etfo.ca.

WHAT IS COLLABORATIVE LEARNING?

In collaborative (or co-operative) learning, students work together to learn concepts or skills they might not understand on their own or in competition with one another. The primary purpose is to develop understanding and deepen learning by working together and learning from each other.

CASE STUDY

Frustrated with the results of the group work she was assigning, Lori was looking for a better way to have her students work together. In her experience, group work resulted in a few students doing all the work, or students doing the work independently and then just putting it all together to turn in.

After attending a professional learning session on collaborative learning, Lori realized she had been using group work to have students complete a task or project instead of using it as a learning opportunity. The next day, Lori placed her students into random groups of three and sent them to white boards to work through a prompt to help them develop stronger reasons when asked to “explain” something. The prompt they were given was: Explain why selective logging is a sustainable practice.

Students had previously co-created the success criteria for the skill “explain” and knew they needed to try and come up with a reason that was relevant and specific to the prompt. Although students were creating persuasive reasons for why selective logging is a sustainable practice, the purpose of the collaborative learning was to develop the skills to explain.

As the groups were working, Lori circulated throughout the room listening and

offering feedback. Each group then had an opportunity to share their thinking during consolidation. Lori noticed that the learners were much more successful during their independent practice after participating in this collaborative learning task.

The days of being frustrated when marking group projects that were mostly done by one student became a thing of the past for Lori. She now uses collaborative learning in a way that benefits all her students.

ASSESSMENT FOR LEARNING

Collaborative learning supports assessment for learning by allowing students to practise a particular skill and use the success criteria to monitor their improvement. Collaborative groups, especially when meeting at white boards, also provide an opportunity for educators to gather evidence of learning and give timely feedback.

For more information about assessment for learning please visit etfoassessment.ca.

CULTURALLY RELEVANT AND RESPONSIVE ASSESSMENT

Collaborative learning allows students to learn from and with one another while developing deeper cultural competence – the ability to effectively interact, work and develop meaningful relationships with people of various cultural backgrounds. Collaborative learning also allows students to communicate and share their thoughts through a variety of methods depending on their strengths (e.g., written, verbal, images, etc.) and to understand the learning in a way that better aligns to their identity and learning needs.



HOW TO GET STARTED WITH COLLABORATIVE LEARNING

1. Develop a question or prompt that supports student learning of a skill or concept
2. Create randomized groups
3. Have students work together to develop one response or answer to the prompt
4. Gather evidence (does not have to be recorded) of student learning by circulating from group to group offering instruction and/or feedback as needed
5. Consolidate understanding by:
 - hearing from each group
 - highlighting something a group did well
 - working through a response that needs more substance or elaboration

PROFESSIONAL JUDGEMENT

The purpose of assessment is to improve student learning. Teacher professional judgement is essential to considering the whole child and understanding their learning needs through various assessment

methods. It is also a teacher's professional responsibility to keep up-to-date assessment records that capture this information, which may be requested by administrators or used to communicate progress with families.

For more information, visit the Professional Judgement page at members.etfo.ca.

CONNECTIONS TO ETFO'S ANTI-OPPRESSIVE FRAMEWORK

Collaborative learning is a teaching strategy that helps build inclusive communities. When students work in randomized groups, they can share their perspectives and hear those of others, which helps to build cultural competency. More importantly, collaborative learning shifts the classroom to be more learner-focused, building engagement and empowering students. Collaborative learning can help learners uncover power imbalances so that both educators and learners can work towards dismantling structural and systemic inequalities that exist within our society.



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DEVELOP MEANINGFUL
RELATIONSHIPS WITH
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